Working Alone Safely

A Guide for Employers and Employees

PREPARED BY: MINISTER'S COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE
HEALTH AND SAFETY – WORKING ALONE BEST PRACTICES

SEPTEMBER 2000

Canada Post Corporation Publication #1827901

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

Prepared by the Minister's Committee to Promote Health and Safety – Working Alone Best Practices

Jon Burkinshaw (Chair)	V.P. (retired), ATCO Power
Jason Foster	Alberta Federation of Labour
Dan Kelly	Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Linda Gagnon	Retail Merchants Association of Canada
Gerry Collinge	7-Eleven Inc.
Dan Clarke	Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Yan Lau	Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Alberta's 1.6 million workers are the backbone of our prosperous economy and vibrant communities. Their significant contribution to our province and families depends on our ongoing partnership with industry to make our workplaces healthy and safe. For Tara McDonald and other workers who have died or been injured on the job, we can honour and remember them by renewing our commitment to safer workplaces.

Clint Dunford
Minister, Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Preface

Alberta Human Resources and Employment has been reviewing the General Safety Regulation (GSR) with the help of a task force representing employers and employees. The GSR Review Task Force, established in April 1999 with 19 members, was given the mandate to consult with stakeholders and prepare a proposal for new regulations on the safety rules for workplaces. The safety rules for "working alone" situations are part of the overall proposal. The GSR review is anticipated to be finished by December 2000.

Most Alberta employers have employees who will need to work alone. Given the public's concern for the safety of employees who work alone, the Honourable Clint Dunford, Minister of Human Resources and Employment, asked the GSR Review Task Force to submit a separate proposal on "working alone". The proposal on "working alone" has gone through extensive public consultation including direct mail-outs to 700 stakeholders and announcements in the Occupational Health and Safety Magazine, which goes to every employer in the province. Over 85% of the respondents supported the proposal. Based on the Task Force's recommendations, the General Safety Regulation was amended to address situations where employees are required to work alone.

To complement the regulatory changes, Minister Dunford appointed the Minister's Committee to Promote Health and Safety - Working Alone Best Practices on April 3, 2000. Five business and community leaders representing labour, large and small employers and convenience stores joined two Alberta Human Resources and Employment resource staff on the Committee. The Committee was asked to identify practical measures to reduce risks faced by employees working alone.

"Working Alone Safely - A Guide for Employers and Employees" represents the final recommendations of the Committee on best practices for people working alone in different situations. In the process of preparing the handbook, the Committee sought input from stakeholders and the public and asked industry stakeholders and the Crime Prevention Unit of the Edmonton Police Service to review and provide comments on the handbook. "Working Alone Safely - A Guide for Employers and Employees" has unanimous support of all members of the Committee.

It is hoped that the information and the checklists in this handbook will become useful tools for employers and employees in implementing best practices, including hazard assessments, for different working alone situations.

For more information on the new requirements for "working alone", please call Alberta Human Resources and Employment in:

EDMONTON	**(780) 427-8848**
CALGARY	**(403) 297-2222**

Outside Edmonton or Calgary, please call 310-0000 to be connected toll-free.
Or check out our website at: http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/workingalone

Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Five Working Alone Situations That May Put Employees At Risk 5

Industry Best Practices 6

Best Practices For Working Alone Situations 7
- Getting Started On Your Safety Program 8
- Best Practices - Employees Who Handle Cash 10
- Best Practices - Employees Who Meet Clients Away From Their Base Office 12
- Best Practices - Employees Who Perform Hazardous Work 13
- Best Practices - Employees Who Travel Alone 14
- Best Practices - Employees At Risk Of Violence Because They Are Isolated 15

Legal Requirements - What They Mean To You 16
- Occupational Health And Safety Act 16
- The General Safety Regulation – Working Alone Section 16

Appendix 1.1 Checklist For Employees Who Handle Cash 18

Appendix 1.2 Checklist For Employees Who Meet Clients Away From Their Base Office 20

Appendix 1.3 Checklist For Employees Who Perform Hazardous Work 21

Appendix 1.4 Checklist For Employees Who Travel Alone 22

Appendix 1.5 Checklist For Employees At Risk Of Violence Because They Are Isolated 23

Appendix 2 Legislation On "Working Alone" 24
- Occupational Health And Safety Act 24
- General Safety Regulation 24
- General Safety Amendment Regulation 25

What All Clerks Should Know - Robbery Prevention Standards 27

Violence Prevention Procedures In Case Of Robbery 29

Phone Numbers Your Should Know 31

References 33

Introduction

With the amendment to the General Safety Regulation, employers have responsibilities for minimizing and eliminating risks associated with employees working alone.

This handbook outlines employers' obligations and how businesses can meet the new regulatory requirements.

Under the General Safety Regulation-Working Alone section, employers are required to assess their workplace and take preventative measures that eliminate or minimize risks when their employees work alone.

Employers are also required to ensure employees working alone have some way of communicating with individuals who can respond immediately to any emergency situation.

To help employers develop effective health and safety programs in their workplaces, the handbook also provides employers with a practical guide that describes general "best practices" recognized and followed by businesses with effective programs in place to make their workplaces safe.

Throughout this handbook, the word **"must"** is used to refer to **mandatory requirements** while **"should"** indicates **recommendations** that are **highly desirable**.

Five Working Alone Situations That May Put Employees At Risk

Employees who work alone can be grouped into five broad categories:

(1) Employees who handle cash. This includes convenience store clerks, retail and food outlet employees, and taxi drivers. Please see Appendix 1.1.

(2) Employees who travel away from base office to meet clients. This includes home care employees, social service employees and bylaw officers. Please see Appendix 1.2.

(3) Employees who do hazardous work but have no routine interaction with customers or the public. This includes employees in the logging, oil and gas industries. Please see Appendix 1.3.

(4) Employees who travel alone but have no routine interaction with customers or the public. This includes truck drivers and business people in transit. Please see Appendix 1.4.

(5) Employees who are at risk of a violent attack because their work site is isolated from public view. This includes security guards and custodians. Please see Appendix 1.5.

Each of these situations has different hazards and ways to control them.

This handbook contains recommended strategies and checklists for employers that pertain to the five categories of working alone situations.

Employers should refer to the category and checklist appropriate to their operation for the review of the practices on hazard assessment, hazard prevention, training and education.

Employers are invited to add additional items to the checklist.

Industry Best Practices

Best practices for any health and safety program and for situations where employees work alone involve:

- **Management's commitment to the health and safety of their employees.** Any incidents that occur at the workplace should be investigated and corrective action should be taken by the employer. Wherever possible, employers are encouraged to work with their staff to develop sound and practical safety procedures that are clearly understood and followed.

- **Assessing the hazards of your workplace.** To start building an effective safety program, the employer needs to take into account the business or area's incident history. Employers should also assess aspects of the physical layout of the workplace that prevent staff from doing their jobs properly.

- **Taking corrective actions or measures to prevent or minimize hazards or incidents from occurring.**

- **Training and educating your staff so they can perform their jobs effectively.**

- **Investigating an incident that has been reported by employees and following through with measures that will prevent the incident from occurring again.**

- **Evaluating your safety measures on a regular basis to ensure that these measures work, taking into account any new changes in your business operation.**

Best Practices for Working Alone Situations

Some best practices are common to all working alone situations. These include proper employee training and having an effective communications system so that employees who are working alone can easily contact someone in case of an emergency. These measures are effective in reducing the risk associated with working alone.

There are additional ways employers can minimize the risk for employees who are working alone.

It may be possible to eliminate any hazards of working alone by rearranging work schedules. For example, two loggers who are working in isolated areas could be assigned to the same cutting area so that neither is required to work alone.

However, requiring two employees may not be practical or effective in some situations. Employers have to weigh all factors to decide the most effective approach to achieve employee safety.

More information on best practices for working alone situations is available in the references listed at the end of the handbook.

Getting Started On Your Safety Program

To help employers make their workplaces safer for employees who are working alone, the first task is to complete a hazard assessment.

Hazard Assessment

A work site hazard assessment is a common sense look at the workplace to find existing hazards for employees working alone.

Employers need to:

- review records and past experiences, and
- identify measures or actions needed to correct any hazards.

Completing these two initial steps is important in the success of any health and safety prevention program. The regulations also require employers to involve their staff in this process.

If employers have limited experience in this area, or are unsure of what measures they can take, they may wish to contact outside experts such as a health and safety consultant.

For retail businesses, employers may wish to contact the Crime Prevention Unit in their local police service.

(1) Review of Records and Past Incidents

When identifying workplace hazards, employers should talk to their employees and review the experience of the business over the previous two or three years. This involves collecting and examining the history of past events that may reveal the risk of workplace violence and injury. Consider what happened before and during the incident, and note the relevant details of the situation and its outcome. Employers should check with similar businesses if they do not have personal experience of past incidents.

Employers should also see if there are apparent trends in injuries or incidents relating to a particular work site, job title, activity, or time of day or week. Employers should identify specific tasks that may be associated with increased risk.

Some good sources to check include injury and illness records resulting from "working alone" incidents, employees' compensation claims, and police robbery reports that identify specific incidents related to working alone.

(2) Inspect and Analyze Your Work Site

After reviewing records or past incidents, employers need to carefully examine the workplace, day-to-day management practices and other situations that may put employees at risk. This will help employers to develop and put in place specific preventative measures to address these problems.

An employer's review should look at:

- all factors that may make the risk of violence more likely, such as physical features of the building and environment, lighting deficiencies, lack of telephones and other communication devices, areas of unsecured access, and areas with known security problems (e.g. parking lots).

- factors that make the risk of occupational injury more likely or severe, such as high hazard work (e.g. tree cutting), isolation from first aid services, and inability to call for help.

- the effectiveness of existing safety measures. Find out whether those measures are being used and whether employees have been adequately trained in their use.

Appendix I contains sample checklists that illustrate a series of questions that may be helpful during a work site inspection and analysis.

Best Practices - Employees Who Handle Cash

The primary risk to employees who handle money and valuables is the potential of violence. The main motivating factor is robbery. Research has shown that the following types of industries are at the greatest risk of robbery and workplace assault:

- liquor stores
- gasoline service stations
- jewelry stores
- convenience stores
- eating and drinking places
- taxis

A considerable amount of research has been done on different controls aimed at reducing the risk of workplace violence and robbery.

The following strategies should be included in any program:

Cash Handling – Businesses that take steps to reduce the amount of cash on hand, (through the use of devices such as drop safes) and who publicize the fact, lower the incentive for robbers to select them as a target. A good cash control policy is considered the most effective deterrent measure.

Good Visibility – If a business can place its cash handling in an area of high visibility, the chances of robbery can be greatly decreased. The ideal sales counter location should be visible from all four sides from both the inside and outside of the store. Counters should be located in front of windows with good visibility from the outside and away from walls.

Robbery Awareness Training – Employees and employers can act to reduce their risk of robbery if they are trained what to do. For instance:

- robbers prefer to get in and out quickly when the store has no other customers. If employees are trained to be away from the sales counter when no sales are being made, it makes the business a less attractive target.
- robbers do not want to be identified. If employees are encouraged to greet and make eye contact with everyone that enters the store, the robber's motivation will be decreased.

- since good counter visibility is critical, employees and employers need to know that they should not block sight lines with posters or boxes.
- employees should be encouraged to follow good cash handling practices by using the drop safe.
- employees trained in recognizing potentially violent situations can act to prevent them.
- employees need to know what to do to minimize their risk of being injured (if a robbery does happen).
- employees and employers need to know how and when to use safety devices like personal alarms. Employees should not use personal alarms while a robbery is in progress. This may only make the situation worse by making the intruder panic.

Employers can contact their local police service or the Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association for further information or resources on robbery awareness training.

Escape and Access Routes – Lack of escape and access routes often discourage a robbery. The side or back door should be locked from the outside at all times with only the main entrance accessible to customers. This practice also prevents robbers from entering the store undetected. However, fire code regulations must be taken into consideration. If exits are near well-lighted areas or visible to the public, this reduces the appeal of the store as a potential robbery site.

Security Systems - Robbers do not want to be identified and security systems are a good deterrent. Typical security systems available include video surveillance cameras, alarms (personal and remote), mirrors, observation windows and height markers. Businesses should advertise their security measures to increase their effectiveness.

Protective Shielding - Although not commonly used in business, protective shielding can be a control measure in reducing the risk of violence. The physical barrier provides some protection to employees and makes it more difficult for robbers to intimidate victims. This might be an appropriate tool in high-risk situations.

To complete the checklist for employers who handle cash, turn to Appendix 1.1, page 18.

Best Practices - Employees Who Meet Clients Away From Their Base Office

Employees who meet with clients away from the office may face an unfamiliar environment and unpredictable client behaviour. Risks in such situations include assault, robbery and verbal abuse.

Prevention strategies include using a safety checklist and having a safe visit plan to guide employees to carry out their job safely. Employees in this category include home care workers and nurses, real estate agents, social services workers, bylaw officers, and government department enforcement officers.

The following practices can be used to reduce the risk of violence to employees who travel to their clients' premises:

Safe Work Procedure - The employer should consider a standard safety awareness checklist so that employees can evaluate their risk. The evaluation should take into consideration client behaviour, location, previous experiences and the presence of other dangerous items - e.g., weapons, vicious dogs.

Safe Visit Plan - A safe visit plan should be made if employees are entering a potentially unsafe situation. The plan should outline control measures chosen to help the employer to track the safety of employees working at the client's premises. Control measures include using an active communication system, switching the meeting place to a safer and more friendly location, or using "two employees" to eliminate working alone.

To complete the checklist for employees who meet clients away from their base office, turn to Appendix 1.2, page 20.

Best Practices - Employees Who Perform Hazardous Work

Employees who perform hazardous work alone, without routine interaction with other employees and the public, may be unable to get immediate help.

The primary prevention strategy is to control the hazards associated with the work. Industries that have employees in this category are forestry (e.g. loggers) and oil and gas.

The following prevention strategies are essential in reducing the risks associated with this type of working alone situation:

Safe Work Procedure - Having written safe work procedures for hazardous work is essential. They provide standard instructions to all employees to carry out the work safely.

Equipment Safety - The employer must ensure that employees use equipment as intended and according to the manufacturer's specification. All equipment used in a work site must be maintained in good working condition, whether or not it is being used in a "working alone" situation. High hazard equipment should have a dead-man switch to prevent accidental activation of the equipment. The switch should always be in good working order.

Equipment and Supplies - In addition to proper equipment, appropriate first aid and emergency supplies must be provided to employees who are working alone at a work site.

Travel Plan - If employees are working alone in a remote location, the employer should establish a sign-out procedure to track their whereabouts. An "overdue employee" procedure should also be in place for locating employees who fail to report on time.

To complete the checklist for employees who perform hazardous work, turn to Appendix 1.3, page 21.

Best Practices - Employees Who Travel Alone

Some of the risk to employees who travel alone involves injuries from motor vehicle accidents. The risk is greater when employees cannot communicate in remote areas or are unable to summon help. Employees performing fieldwork by themselves, employees in the transportation industry and business people in transit are exposed to the risk.

The prevention strategies for this situation focus on safety on the road. The following strategies should be addressed in the overall management of the risk:

Safe Work Procedure - Employees must have full concentration on the road when travelling alone. An employer should allow sufficient rest time for employees who are travelling on long trips.

Equipment and Supplies - Well-maintained vehicles prevent exposing employees to unnecessary risk. Appropriate first aid and emergency supplies must be provided.

Travel Plan - An employer should consider a procedure appropriate to the hazards to track the whereabouts of their employees. The travel plan submitted by the employee can be used to assess the rest time available to the employee travelling alone.

To complete the checklist for employees who travel alone, turn to Appendix 1.4, page 22.

Best Practices - Employees At Risk Of Violence Because They Are Isolated

For employees who work in isolation away from routine contact with other persons, there is a risk of violent attacks by intruders. Employees in this category include custodians and security guards. Site security is therefore the most important control measure.

The following control measures should be taken by the employer to reduce the risk:

Safe Work Procedure - The employer should have safe work procedures directing employees to check the security of the work site at the beginning and at the end of the shift. The procedures should also include how to behave when confronted with an intruder.

Site Security – A secure facility with a proper security system is the primary defense against break-ins. A combination of remote and personal alarms and video surveillance may be used in the security system. Windows and doors should be secured with heavy duty locks and suitable barriers. Employers should consider improving the security of windows and doors.

To complete the checklist for employees who work in isolation, turn to Appendix 1.5, page 23.

Legal Requirements - What They Mean To You

Occupational Health And Safety Act

Alberta's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* sets standards to protect and promote the health and safety of employees throughout the province.

The *Act* outlines the rights and responsibilities of employers, employees, and others who are on the work site.

Under the *Act*, (Section 2(1)) employers must do everything reasonable to protect the health and safety of employees. This means that employers must set up safe work practices at their work site and make sure these practices are followed.

Employees are required by the *Act* (Section 2(2)) to work safely and cooperate with their employer by following health and safety rules.

It is up to the employer to make sure employees have the skills and training needed to perform their work safely. Employees must be told about any dangers at the job site (General Safety Regulation, section 15).

The General Safety Regulation – Working Alone Section

In addition to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the General Safety Regulation includes specific rules covering situations where employees work alone (Section 14.1).

Employers can eliminate the risk of employees working alone, as well as the need to comply with the working alone provisions, if they choose to organize work schedules and procedures to remove the occurrence of working alone.

An employee is considered to be working alone if the employee works alone at a work site in circumstances where assistance is not readily available when needed.

In this instance the employer **must:**

(1) Conduct a hazard assessment

Employers must closely examine and identify existing or potential safety hazards in the workplace. The assessment must be in writing and communicated to all affected staff. Where practicable, employers must also involve affected employees in conducting the hazard assessment, and in the elimination, reduction or control of the identified hazards.

(2) Eliminate or reduce the risks

Employers must take practical steps to eliminate the hazards identified. If it is not practicable to do so, employers must implement procedures to reduce or control the hazards.

(3) Establish an effective means of communication

Employers must have a communication system for employees to contact other people who can respond to the employees' need. The system must be appropriate to the hazards involved.

(4) Ensure employees are trained and educated

Employers must ensure their employees are trained and educated so they can perform their jobs safely.

Employees must be made aware of the hazards of working alone and the preventative steps that can be taken to reduce or eliminate potential risks.

These rules take into account a wide variety of situations where employees work alone. Their intent is to require employers to consider the hazards specific to their work sites and to adopt safety measures that address these hazards.

Occupational Health and Safety Officers inspecting a workplace will evaluate compliance with the *Act* and Regulation using this guide as a reference standard.

For more specific information about sections of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and Regulation relevant to addressing working alone, please refer to Appendix 2 of this handbook.

Appendix 1.1: Working Alone

Checklist For Employees Who Handle Cash (e.g. convenience store clerks, retail and food outlet employees, taxi drivers)

This checklist is intended to help employers implement best practices for employees working alone in situations with substantial risk of robbery or other criminal acts because of cash exchange with the public. The questions in bold reflect mandatory requirements. Other questions suggest recommended practices that are highly desirable.

Yes	No	N/A	**CASH AND MERCHANDISE CONTROL**
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a policy to control cash and valuables in the workplace?
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a procedure to minimize the cash availability?
❑	❑	❑	Do you use devices such as drop safes to limit the cash-on-hand to less than $50?
❑	❑	❑	Do you post signs in prominent places notifying the public that limited cash is kept on the premises?

Yes	No	N/A	**VISIBILITY**
❑	❑	❑	Do you have good visibility in the workplace to discourage robbery?
❑	❑	❑	Are doors and windows clear of signs, posters and window displays to allow good, two-way visibility of the cash handling area?
❑	❑	❑	Is the check-out stand or cash register located near the front, and in the centre, of the business where it is clearly visible to observers outside?
❑	❑	❑	Is the cash register visible from all sides?
❑	❑	❑	Are shelves and counters kept low enough for good visibility throughout the premises?
❑	❑	❑	Are all indoor lights bright and working properly?
❑	❑	❑	Is the entrance to the building easily seen from the street and free of heavy shrub growth?
❑	❑	❑	Is lighting bright in parking and adjacent areas?

Yes	No	N/A	**EMPLOYEE TRAINING**
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?**
❑	❑	❑	Do you provide training on working alone to employees?
			Does the training program include:
❑	❑	❑	The use of the "Robbery Awareness Education Kit" developed by the Edmonton Police Service, or equivalent resources?
❑	❑	❑	Strategies used by the business to discourage robberies?
❑	❑	❑	How to behave during a robbery attempt?
❑	❑	❑	Training in conflict resolution and non-violent response to threatening situations?
❑	❑	❑	Training in emergency response procedures for robberies and other crimes on site?
❑	❑	❑	Proper maintenance of the security system?
❑	❑	❑	How employees get timely assistance when needed?
❑	❑	❑	Testing employees' knowledge at the end of the orientation program?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Yes	No	N/A	**SECURITY SYSTEM**
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a security system at your work site?
❑	❑	❑	Do you post signs in prominent places to publicize the use of security systems at the work site?
			In choosing the security system, has consideration been given to the following systems:
❑	❑	❑	Video surveillance camera
❑	❑	❑	Alarm (personal and remote)
❑	❑	❑	Mirrors
❑	❑	❑	Observation windows
❑	❑	❑	Height markers
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Yes	No	N/A	**COMMUNICATION**
❑	❑	❑	**Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?**
			Does the method of communication involve one or more of the following:
❑	❑	❑	Regular telephone, cellphone, or radio contact with designated person?
❑	❑	❑	Personal alarm system?
❑	❑	❑	The use of regular security patrols?
❑	❑	❑	Agreements with a nearby business for regular visual and/or telephone contact?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____
❑	❑	❑	Are emergency telephone numbers (police, employer, etc.) prominently displayed and readily accessible by the employees?

Yes	No	N/A	**OTHER MEASURES**
❑	❑	❑	Have you eliminated all easy escape routes for robbers?
❑	❑	❑	Have you considered the use of protective shielding to protect employees?
❑	❑	❑	Have proper resources (e.g. local police service, consultants, designated staff) been used in establishing policy and procedures for employees working alone?

Appendix 1.2: Working Alone

Checklist For Employees Who Meet Clients Away From Their Base Office (e.g. home care workers and nurses, social services workers, real estate agents, bylaw and government enforcement officers)

This checklist is intended to help employers implement best practices for employees working alone with clients away from the employer's premises. The questions in bold reflect mandatory requirements. Other questions suggest recommended practices that are highly desirable.

Yes	No	N/A	EMPLOYEE TRAINING
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?**
❑	❑	❑	Are employees trained to recognize potentially violent situations?
❑	❑	❑	Are employees trained in non-violent responses to threatening situations?
❑	❑	❑	Have employees been instructed to follow the employer's safe work procedures when meeting clients at their premises?

Yes	No	N/A	SAFE WORK PROCEDURE
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a safe work procedure for employees working at their client's premises?
			Does the safe work procedure include an evaluation based on risk awareness and take into consideration the following:
❑	❑	❑	Client behaviour?
❑	❑	❑	Location (unsafe area, isolation, poor lighting, unlit parking, unsafe building)?
❑	❑	❑	Presence of dangerous items (weapon, vicious pets)?
❑	❑	❑	Previous case history of client and location?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____
❑	❑	❑	Are employees required to have a safe visit plan for high risk situations based on the above evaluation?
			Does the safe visit plan consider the following control measures:
❑	❑	❑	Use of a cellular telephone to maintain regular contact with the office?
❑	❑	❑	Phone designated person prior to and after leaving the client's premises?
❑	❑	❑	"Buddy system" – arrange for a second person to accompany the employee in a high risk situation while on the visit?
❑	❑	❑	Arrange to meet the client at a safe location?
❑	❑	❑	Use of security services?
❑	❑	❑	Defer visit until proper safety measures can be met?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Yes	No	N/A	COMMUNICATION
❑	❑	❑	**Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?**
			Does the method of communication involve one of the following:
❑	❑	❑	Regular telephone, cellphone, or radio contact with designated persons?
❑	❑	❑	Check-in points with other employees?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Appendix 1.3: Working Alone

Checklist For Employees Who Perform Hazardous Work (e.g. forestry workers, oil and gas workers)

This checklist is intended to help employers implement best practices for employees working alone at hazardous jobs without routine interaction with the public. The questions in bold reflect mandatory requirements. Other questions suggest recommended practices that are highly desirable.

Yes	No	N/A	EMPLOYEE TRAINING
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?**
❑	❑	❑	Are employees aware of the increased risk from carrying out the hazardous work alone?

Yes	No	N/A	SAFE WORK PROCEDURES
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a safe work procedure for the hazardous work?
❑	❑	❑	Did the employer develop the safe work procedure with the involvement of the affected employees?
❑	❑	❑	Is there a procedure requiring employees to sign out before a job, and to provide information on a travelling plan and an estimated time of return?
❑	❑	❑	Is there a procedure for the employee to check-in prior to and at the end of the planned activities at the site?

Yes	No	N/A	EQUIPMENT SAFETY
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure equipment is in good working condition prior to being used on a work site?**
❑	❑	❑	**Does all equipment and machinery used by employees meet regulatory standards?**
❑	❑	❑	**Are equipment and machinery being used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications?**
❑	❑	❑	Is a dead-man switch used in high hazard machinery to prevent unintentional activation?

Yes	No	N/A	EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
			Do you equip employees with the appropriate first aid supplies?
❑	❑	❑	Do employees carry the required first aid supplies?
❑	❑	❑	Do employees carry the necessary personal protective equipment?
❑	❑	❑	Do employees carry emergency supplies if they are to work in remote areas with inclement weather?

Yes	No	N/A	COMMUNICATION
❑	❑	❑	**Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?**
			Does the method of communication involve one of the following:
❑	❑	❑	Regular telephone, cellphone, or radio contact?
❑	❑	❑	Scheduled check-in points with other employees?
❑	❑	❑	Alarm system that could alert other employees?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____
❑	❑	❑	Is there an "overdue employee" procedure to initiate searches for employees who fail to report?

Appendix 1.4: Working Alone

Checklist For Employees Who Travel Alone (e.g. truck drivers, field workers, and business people in transit)

This checklist is intended to help employers implement best practices for employees travelling alone while working, with no interaction with customers. The questions in bold reflect mandatory requirements. Other questions suggest recommended practices that are highly desirable.

Yes	No	N/A	EMPLOYEE TRAINING
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?**
❑	❑	❑	Are employees informed of the hazards associated with working alone?
❑	❑	❑	For employees who have to travel alone to remote locations, do they have some training in emergency survival?

Yes	No	N/A	SAFE WORK PROCEDURE
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a safe work procedure for employees travelling alone?
❑	❑	❑	Do employees have adequate rest periods between work periods when they are travelling alone?

Yes	No	N/A	EQUIPMENT SAFETY
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure vehicles used by employees are in good working condition?**
❑	❑	❑	Are all vehicles used by employees under regular maintenance programs?

Yes	No	N/A	EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
❑	❑	❑	**Do you provide employees with the appropriate first aid supplies?**
❑	❑	❑	Do employees carry the required first aid supplies?
❑	❑	❑	Do employees carry emergency supplies when they travel in extreme cold or inclement weather conditions?

Yes	No	N/A	COMMUNICATION
❑	❑	❑	**Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?**
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a procedure for tracking "overdue" employees that is appropriate to the hazards?
			Does the method of communication involve the following:
❑	❑	❑	Regular telephone, cellphone, or radio contact?
❑	❑	❑	Reporting to designated locations according to the "travel plan"?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Appendix 1.5: Working Alone

Checklist For Employees At Risk Of Violence Because They Are Isolated (e.g. custodians, security guards)

This checklist is intended to help employers implement best practices for employees working in isolation away from public view. The questions in bold reflect mandatory requirements. Other questions suggest recommended practices that are highly desirable.

Yes	No	N/A	EMPLOYEE TRAINING
❑	❑	❑	**Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?**
❑	❑	❑	Are employees aware of the hazards associated with working in isolation away from public view?
❑	❑	❑	Are employees trained in non-violent responses to threatening situations?
❑	❑	❑	Are employees trained in the proper use of security systems to prevent/ discourage intruders?
❑	❑	❑	Are employees trained in questioning strangers about the appropriateness of their presence?

Yes	No	N/A	SAFE WORK PROCEDURE
❑	❑	❑	Do you have a safe work procedure to secure the work site?
❑	❑	❑	Does the safe work procedure include appropriate behaviours when confronted with an intruder?
❑	❑	❑	Does the safe work procedure require a check for secure work site prior to the start and at the end of the shift?

Yes	No	N/A	SITE SECURITY
❑	❑	❑	Do you provide a safe work site for employees working alone?
❑	❑	❑	Does the site have a security system?
			Does the security system include the following:
❑	❑	❑	Remote alarm?
❑	❑	❑	Personal alarm?
❑	❑	❑	Video surveillance camera?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____
❑	❑	❑	Is the alarm system regularly checked for correct operation?
❑	❑	❑	Are all doors and windows secured with appropriate barriers?
❑	❑	❑	Is public access into the work site limited?
❑	❑	❑	Are there adequate lights at the site entrance and parking area?

Yes	No	N/A	COMMUNICATION
❑	❑	❑	**Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?**
			Does the method of communication involve the use of:
❑	❑	❑	Regular telephone, cellphone, or radio contact with a designated person?
❑	❑	❑	Regular security patrol?
❑	❑	❑	Alarm system to security services?
❑	❑	❑	Regular visit by co-workers?
❑	❑	❑	Others? Specify: _____

Appendix 2: Legislation on Working Alone

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Section 2: Obligations of Employers, Workers, etc.

2(1) Every employer shall ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable for him to do so,

(a) the health and safety of

(i) workers engaged in the work of that employer, and
(ii) those workers not engaged in the work of that employer but present at the work site at which that work is being carried out, and

(b) that the workers engaged in the work of that employer are aware of their responsibilities and duties under this *Act* and the regulations.

(2) Every worker shall, while engaged in an occupation,

(a) take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of himself and of other workers present while he is working, and

(b) cooperate with his employer for the purposes of protecting the health and safety of

(i) himself,
(ii) other workers engaged in the work of the employer, and
(iii) other workers not engaged in the work of that employer but present at the work site at which that work is being carried out.

General Safety Regulation

Section 15: Identification of Known Safety Hazards

15 An employer shall ensure that a known safety hazard which

(a) cannot be readily controlled or eliminated, and
(b) has the potential for causing serious injury is identified and brought to the attention of workers who may be exposed to the hazard.

General Safety Amendment Regulation

1.) The *General Safety Regulation* (AR 448/83) is amended by this Regulation.
2.) The following is added after section 14:

14.1(1) In this section, "to work alone" means to work alone at a work site in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of an injury, illness or emergency.

(2) When a worker is required to work alone, the employer shall

a) first conduct a hazard assessment to identify existing or potential hazards arising from the conditions and circumstances of the worker's work, and
b) establish an effective means of communication between the worker and persons capable of responding to the worker's needs.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b), "effective means of communication" means radio, telephone or other electronic communication device.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (2)(b), if an effective means of communication is not practicable or readily available at the worksite, the employer shall

a) visit the worker, or
b) ensure the worker contacts the employer

at intervals of time appropriate to the nature of the hazards associated with the worker's work.

(5) In addition to conducting a hazard assessment under subsection (2)(a), the employer shall conduct further hazard assessments at intervals of time appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of the worker's work.

(6) The employer shall take all reasonable steps

a) to eliminate any hazard identified during a hazard assessment or,
b) to control any hazard identified during a hazard assessment if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the hazard.

(7) If practicable, the employer shall have the workers affected by a hazard assessment participate

a) in conducting the hazard assessment, and
b) in the elimination or control of any hazard identified during the hazard assessment.

(8) A hazard assessment must be in writing and be communicated to all workers affected by the assessment.

3.) If a worker is required to work alone immediately before this Regulation comes into force, the employer shall conduct a hazard assessment under section 14.1(2) of the *General Safety Regulation* (AR 448/83) within 90 days of the coming into force of this Regulation and shall conduct further hazard assessments after that date in accordance with section 14.1(5) of the *General Safety Regulation* (AR 448/83).

What All Clerks Should Know

Robbery Prevention Standards

KEEP THE CASH REGISTER FUND TO A MINIMUM.

- Drop all $10 and $20 bills as soon as you receive them.
- Advertise the policy and let customers see you making drops.
- Ask customers for exact change or the smallest bill possible.
- Keep bait money (several bills with recorded serial numbers) in the cash tray for positive identification in the event of a robbery.

KEEP THE SALES COUNTER IN CLEAR VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE STORE.

- Move any posters or displays that block the registers from view outside.
- After dark, remove any displays a robber could possibly hide behind.
- Make sure you can see out and the police or passersby can see in.

MAKE THE STORE ATTRACTIVE TO CUSTOMERS, UNATTRACTIVE TO ROBBERS.

- Keep the store neat and clean.
- Keep it well stocked.

GIVE A FRIENDLY GREETING TO EVERYONE WHO ENTERS THE STORE.

- Look them directly in the eyes.
- Ask persons alone if they need assistance. Customers like the attention and robbers don't.
- Ask the customer ahead of someone suspicious, "Are you together?" The customer will usually turn around to look at the person and then may be able to help make an identification.

SPOT POSSIBLE HIDING PLACES OUTSIDE THE STORE.

- Notice possible escape routes from the store.
- Locate outside phone booths or other hiding places.
- After dark, observe lighting and dark corners.

KEEP ALERT AT ALL TIMES.

- Notice what is going on outside the store.
- Be aware of cars parked across the street or off to one side of the lot.
- Look for anyone who may be watching the store or loitering in or around it.
- If they do not leave, call the police and ask for a patrol check.

TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS AFTER DARK.

- Drop money into your safe. Don't hide it in a drawer or under the counter.
- Check each night to see that outside lights are on and working.
- Operate one register late at night through early morning. Open the empty unused register drawer and tip it for display.
- Run an "empty register" ... just $5's, $2's, and change.

Source: Information reproduced with the permission of 7-Eleven Stores

Please cut out and post where employees can see this.

Violence Prevention Procedures in Case of Robbery

Do

OBEY THE ROBBER'S ORDERS.

- Robbers seldom hurt people who cooperate with them.
- Let the robber know that you intend to obey.
- If you are not sure of what the robber is telling you to do, ask.

TELL THE ROBBER ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE SURPRISES.

- If you must reach for something or move in any way, tell the robber what to expect.
- If someone is in the back room or is expected in the store, tell the robber.

KEEP IT SHORT AND SMOOTH.

- The longer the robbery takes, the more nervous the robber becomes.
- Handle the entire procedure as if you were making a sale to a customer.
- The average robbery takes less than two minutes.

STAY CALM.

- Keep calm and observe what the robber looks like and what he is wearing. Remember exactly what he says.
- Try to note the robber's exact height (from height marker) as he exits the store (if it is safe to do so).

CALL THE POLICE.

- Always keep emergency numbers near the phone.
- Call the police (911) and don't hang up until they tell you to do so.
- Protect the crime scene. Discontinue business until the police are finished. Don't touch any evidence.
- Call your employer as soon as possible.

Don't

DON'T ARGUE WITH THE ROBBER.

- Give him all the cash and merchandise he wants.
- Once the robbery has started, it is too late for the robber to change his mind.

DON'T FIGHT THE ROBBER.

- The money isn't worth risking harm to you.
- Trying to attack an armed robber is foolhardy, not heroic.

DON'T USE WEAPONS.

- No weapons should be kept in a store. The robber's weapon is already one too many.

DON'T CHASE OR FOLLOW THE ROBBER.

- To chase a robber is to invite violence.
- The police, too, could shoot, mistaking you for one of the robbers.

DON'T ESTIMATE THE AMOUNT OF THE LOSS.

- If you are certain of the exact amount, tell the police. Don't make guesses.

Source: Information reproduced with the permission of 7-Eleven Stores

Please cut out and post where employees can see this.

Phone Numbers You Should Know

Please add any phone numbers that your employees should know (e.g. the Police Service, employer, and others who need to be notified in an emergency).

To find out more about working alone contact:

ALBERTA HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT IN	
EDMONTON	**(780) 427-8848**
CALGARY	**(403) 297-2222**

Outside Edmonton or Calgary, please call 310-0000 to be connected toll-free.

Please cut out and post where employees can see this.

References
(with website addresses)

Documents can be obtained directly from the respective websites or organizations. You can also access the references at the Library of Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 3rd Floor, 10808-99 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0G5.

1. Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association (ACCPA)
(www.accpa.org)
This is an excellent source of information for anyone who would like to get assistance in establishing a robbery prevention program for their business. A "Robbery Awareness Education Kit" developed by the Edmonton Police Service is available from ACCPA for a nominal fee.
[ACCPA, P.O. Box 4100, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8; phone: (780) 432-6400]

2. Code of Practice for Workers Working Alone
(www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/publicat/wshlegis/105cod.html)
This is a guidance document published by the Government of Manitoba concerning the requirements of the Manitoba regulation on employees working alone. It discusses Manitoba's legislation and the requirement to develop a plan on risk assessment and control measures.
[Manitoba Labour, Workplace Safety and Health Division, 200 - 401 York Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P8; phone: (204) 945-3446]

3. Employer Responsibilities for Workers Who Work Alone
(www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/publicat/bulletin/bltn190.html)
This is published by the Government of Manitoba on employees working alone. It describes in plain language the responsibilities of employers under the Manitoba regulation.
[Manitoba Labour, Workplace Safety and Health Division, 200 - 401 York Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P8; phone: (204) 945-3446]

4. A Sample Policy on Workplace Violence
(www.labour.gov.sk.ca/safety/violence/policy/printpage.htm)
The Saskatchewan regulation requires an employer to develop and implement a policy to deal with violence in a prescribed workplace. This document is a sample policy on workplace violence (robberies) for convenience stores.
[Saskatchewan Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Division, 1870 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V7; phone: (306) 787-4496]

5. Working Alone or in Isolation
(web.uvic.ca/ohs/workalone.html)
A general procedure on working alone, or in isolation, from the University of Victoria, British Columbia. The protocol meets the B.C. regulatory requirements.
[University of Victoria, Occupational Health and Safety, Sedgewick Building, Room B136, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 2Y2; phone: (250) 721-8971]

6. Violence in the Workplace
(www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html)
This question-and-answer guide on workplace violence is published by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety. It provides some simple tips on hazard identification and hazard controls on workplace violence in general.
[CCOHS, 250 Main Street East, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6; phone: 1-800-668-4284]

References
(with website addresses)

7. Violence in the Workplace, Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies
(www.cdc.gov/niosh/violcont.html)
The document addresses issues when dealing with workplace violence in various settings such as offices, factories, warehouses, hospitals, convenience stores, and taxicabs. The document is published by National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).
[NIOSH, Publication Dissemination, EID, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 46266-1998, U.S.A.; phone: (513) 533-8328]

8. National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) Website
(www.nacsnet.org)
This is a website maintained by NACS. It contains information on store operations, including security. Since NACS is an association representing owners and employers, most of the information on the website elaborates store-owners' viewpoint.
[NACS, 1605 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 23314, U.S.A.; phone: (703) 684-3600]

A list of references on security can be located by selecting the "Special Interests-Security" icon on the website or going directly to the following web page:

C-Store Central Resources on Security
(www.nacsnet.org/pages/specialinterests/cscpress.cgi/view?t=44.template.html&adtag=STANDARD)

Some of the more relevant references on the subject include:

Bullet Resistant Barriers
(www.nacsnet.org/register/resource/resource/barriers.html)
A one-page summary on why bullet resistant barriers are not effective safety devices.

Multiple Clerks as a Safety Strategy
(www.nacsnet.org/register/resource/resource/clerks.html)
A two-page summary concluding that multiple clerks do not represent a good safety strategy and that multiple staffing patterns do not deter crime.

OHSA Recommendations for Violence Prevention Program
(www.nacsnet.org/register/resource/resource/ohsaguide98.pdf)
The web page posts the OSHA publication (35 pages) in the "pdf" format. The publication provides good hazard assessment techniques and robbery prevention strategies for late-night retail establishments. Employers will find the accompanying checklist practical and easy to use.

Convenience Store Security at the Millennium
(www.nacsnet.org/register/resource/resource/security2000.pdf)
This comprehensive report reviews the literature on the state of the knowledge about the use of two clerks and other security measures to prevent robbery and violence in convenience stores and service stations.

9. Violence to Staff - Reducing the Risk
(stcpp.users.netlink.co.uk/bus_01.htm)

Brief information for employers posted by a Crime Prevention Panel in Britain. It outlines an employer's responsibilities and the steps to take for the risk assessment and reduction.
[South Trafford Crime Prevention Panel, Altrincham Police Station, Barrington Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 1BR, United Kingdom; phone: 0161-856-7777]

10. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
(www.eese.qut.edu.au/hazident.htm)

The article is a simple description of the process of hazard identification, risk assessment and hazard control. The discussion is for workplace health and safety in general, and is not focussed on working alone. The publication is posted by the Queensland University of Technology (Australia).
[Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia; phone: (07) 3864-2111]

11. Violence in the Workplace - Prevention Guide
(www.ccohs.ca)

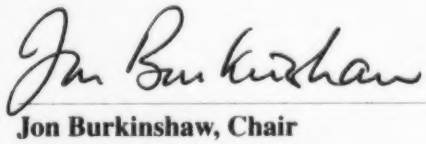
Released by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), this booklet helps people to develop and implement a workplace-specific violence prevention program. It contains risk assessments and prevention strategies for various situations. A practical questionnaire and inspection form are also included. The publication is not posted on the web site, but it can be ordered from CCOHS for $10.
[CCOHS, 250 Main Street East, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6; phone: 1-800-668-4284]

Working Alone Safely
A Guide for Employers and Employees

This report is presented to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment by the Minister's Committee to promote Health and Safety - Working Alone Best Practices.

September 20, 2000

Committee Members:

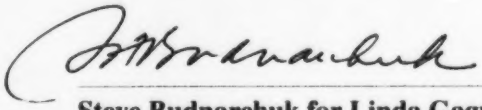


Jon Burkinshaw, Chair
V.P. (retired), ATCO Power

Jason Foster
Alberta Federation of Labour

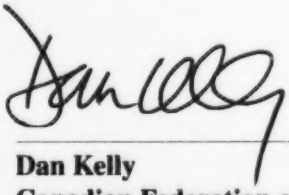
Gerry Collinge
7-Eleven Inc.

Dan Clarke
Alberta Human Resources and Employment



Steve Budnarchuk for Linda Gagnon
Retail Merchants Association of Canada

Yan Lau
Alberta Human Resources and Employment



Dan Kelly
Canadian Federation of Independent Business